

J. Malcolm Greany  
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Interviewed by Jim King, 11/29/98

*--suggest entering some data regarding who Malcolm Greany is  
– his tenure with the Fish and Wildlife Service, his age, health conditions(?),  
etc.—the location of the Regional Office and who Clarence Rhode is--*

King: I always remember you talking about when you arrived in Juneau and you met Clarence.

MG: Clarence gave me my first ride. He picked me up on a highway. I went up to \_\_\_\_\_ Mt. Juneau(?) the top and then I got side tracked and went down the other side, windfall and stuff like that, out in the road here comes a car, and I went “like this,” and Clarence picked me up. He gave me my first job there in 1938. I was tearing out beaver dams at Duck Creek. There were a lot of beaver in there.

King: You know there is a group now trying to restore Duck Creek and get some fish back in there.

MG: There never were any fish in there that I recall, just beaver. When they dammed, they really made big ones too.

King: How were you tearing them out, by hand or dynamite?

MG: By hand! The dam was eroding the road. The Creek eroded up and came over the highway. Clarence wanted to know if I wanted a job and I said “sure.”

King: What did he have you do next?

MG: I finally got bit by a beaver. We had them at the Minifield(?) home. They had some kids there. They wanted me to come out and I went out and I was used to picking

up beaver by the hind feet and I thought I would do the same thing with this one. I grabbed it and it came around and bit me in the butt! I went to Dr. Dauze(?).

King: The kids probably enjoyed that!

MG: Lance Henderson was the chief clerk and he said "what happened to you?" I had the Doctor put in terms what the puzzles(?) were and Lance wanted to know what happened. I told him "I got bit in the butt by a beaver." I had to tell him again what happened. We transferred the beaver to someplace, I forget where it was, I think it may have been Petersburg.

King: Well, you worked around there under Clarence for awhile.

MG: One thing about Clarence, whenever he talked to you, he never sat across the table. He would pull his chair out so there wouldn't be anything between you and him.

King: Well, a lot of us think Clarence Rhode was a great leader. I think you were one of his fans, were you not?

MG: Yes. I got asked by Clarence Anderson, from State Fish and Game, he asked, "what did I have to give to Clarence Rhode." He said, "you know you and Clarence Rhode do not have very much in common." I said, "what does that mean, what's that got to do with you and me?"

King: You didn't have that much in common with Anderson, you are saying?

MG: Yes. I said, "as far as I am concerned, Clarence Rhode is one of the best supervisors I ever had." Like I made a grudge between him and me.

King: You went to work for Anderson too after Statehood? I think he and Clarence Rhode had never gotten along very well together, did they?

MG: No.

King: I know you use to like to tell the story about when General Buckner wanted to buy his hunting license and he wasn't a resident? You were in Anchorage then.

MG: Yes. He came in with one of his Colonel's or somebody and we had a conflict right then and there. The Colonel shook his hand and said, "I would like to have you in the Army." I said, "well, I hope to be in the Army. I hope they put me under you!" He said "why?" and I said, "so I can carry out your orders same as I carry out my orders and \_\_\_\_\_ license. He said, "oh, o.k."

King: He had come in to buy a resident license but he wasn't a resident and he was a general, and you said "no deal." You wouldn't sell him one. Who was in charge then? Was that when Jack O'Connor was in charge of the office?

MG: Yes, he sure was.

King: Did you like working for O'Connor?

MG: No. That's why I quit and went in the Army.

King: I never knew O'Connor.

MG: O'Connor thought everybody in the Fish and Wildlife Service was no good except him. He was the only good one. Remember the pilot that worked for him? He had him fired.

King: Was Holger Larsen in Anchorage then?

MG: I worked for Holger Larsen in Anchorage.

King: I started working under Holger as a stream guard there in Kenai. That would be 12 years after you started working for Clarence Rhode. Well, that got to be quite a hulla-be-lou over the hunting license for the Army, I guess, didn't it.

MG: I guess I need to sign this thing?

King: Well, do you want to? It's a little thing that tells about how they are going to transcribe these tapes and put them in the library. Today's date is November 29, 1998. 1938 to 1998 – how many years is that? Sixty years ago when you first came to Alaska.

We have eight grandchildren now. The little ones are fun. My youngest son, James, is 31 and he is back in Juneau. He is in charge of a non-profit trail management organization. The city and the state and the Forest Service are all putting in some funding on it. Then he also gets some grant money. It is kind of an experiment but he just finished his first year at that and it looks like he has the groundwork laid for another year. You know the way Duck Creek went up there below Thunder Mountain and one of the things he is going to try and work on next summer is a bicycle path on the south side of Duck Creek below the mountains but outside the snow slide areas.

Well, did you know Frank Dufresne?

MG: Oh, yes. He was a good friend, and Homer Jewell. I got a grizzly bear statue back there on my desk that Mrs. Jewell gave me. It's a bronze bear.

King: Homer Jewell. I didn't know him. Was he an agent?

MG: He was an assistant under Dufresne?

King: He was gone before my time. How was it working for Dufresne?

MG: All right. We never had any conflicts.

King: How did you get into the photography business, Malcolm? I remember when I first came to Alaska, you would pick up an Alaska Sportsman's Magazine and it looked like half the wildlife pictures in every issue were taken by J. Malcolm Greany. How did you get started on that?

MG: I started as a taxidermist then I started photographing them. I would go to the zoo and photograph their facial expressions.

King: Yes, but you had a lot of things that weren't in the zoo. You had the best collection of sheep, sea lions, walrus, bear, moose, and caribou pictures of anybody in Alaska.

MG: I think so.

King: One of the things they keep talking about, and it still comes up today, is the federal mismanagement theme that Earnest Gruening played on for statehood promotion and they are still talking about how bad the federal mismanagement was in the 30's and 40's. What do you think about that? Seems like we thought Clarence was doing a pretty good job. Do you have all those old Alaska magazines that you took pictures for?

MG: Some of them I have but most of them I don't.

King: The Forest Service had a lot of your pictures for years. They had them on the map. What have you done with all your pictures? Have you got them here?

MG: I got some of them, but not all of them. I haven't looked at them in years.

King: I have some of your old negatives. You had a box of negatives that was in the file in the Regional Office that you didn't know what to do with. You had most of these all

filed under headings and then there was this box of ones that didn't fit under any other heading and they sat in the file cabinet there for years and I finally took it to my home. I think most of the black and whites that you had in the Regional Office files there went to Anchorage eventually so we don't have those in Juneau anymore.

Well, you need to tell me a story about something.

King: Are you glad you worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service while you were there?

MG: Oh, yes. I had a hard time getting out, getting transferred. Guys were coming and going all the time but for me, nothing happened.

King: So you went into the Army for a few years then you came back. I remember we went up there and spent the night with Red Adney(??) at Chandalar Lake and you and he got into an argument about the photographs or the maps for the Kiska invasion that you had been involved with and he had been involved with. Do you remember that? That was a fun evening we had up there.

Were you in the Regional Office when they split the commercial fisheries off from wildlife? I never did know much about what that was all about.

MG: I was sent down to San Francisco. I picked up a paper there in Chinese and \_\_\_\_\_ I took the headlines and pasted them up and put all Chinese underneath it and everyone started to \_\_\_\_\_ then I went down stairs to the coffee room. They finally ended up with the Forest Service and they sent a copy to Washington, all in Chinese, split between the Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service, joining forces but no one made much sense out of it so I put this down in Chinese. That I can understand.

King: Where would that have been? There was some disagreement over wildlife management on the forest?

MG: Duplication of services. They had their biologists and we had ours. They'd combine them both because they both \_\_\_\_\_. Sometimes the work came right together so they tried to put them altogether. You weren't there then, huh?

King: No, I spent all of the territorial days that I was there in Fairbanks. I didn't know a whole lot about what was going on in Anchorage and Juneau. We would go down and have a meeting and you would take our picture every year.

I see Jay Hammond every once in a while. He comes to Juneau now and then and occasionally I get to talk with him. He is getting to be a pretty popular storyteller now.

So you almost went north with Clarence on the trip he got lost on? Why was it you weren't on that trip?

MG: Were you here when the Secretary of the Interior came up to Juneau?

King: Which one would that be?

MG: I don't know.

King: I wasn't in Juneau. I don't remember that. There was an Assistant Secretary, Ross Leffler(?), I think.

((end of side A of Tape #1))

((start of side A of Tape #2))

King: Clarence Rhode on his last trip, but then you couldn't go for some reason.

MG: I had to take a Civil Service exam. The \_\_\_\_\_ was up here. He recommended they change my title from wildlife agent to visual aid specialist. Before I could do that, I had to take a Civil Service exam. I said to the lady, "I already got this position, why do I have to take another one?" She said, "I don't know, I was just told what to do." She said, "you don't mind, do you?" I said, "no." She said, "you just sit over there and I'll put the tape recorder out here and ask a bunch of questions that are on here and you give me the answers and they will go in there." She said I was supposed to come back on Monday or Tuesday, and Clarence called me in, he said "are you all ready to take aerial photographs?" I said, "yes, but Clarence I got that Civil Service stuff" and he said, "oh, that's right." He said, "well, you get that exam over with and you can come up to Fairbanks after Juneau and I'll send a plane down for you and you can photograph some caribou migrating." They come up with these figures - 20,000 caribou, 10,000 caribou. I asked them how they came up with these figures; how do you count them? One of the biologists said, "that's easy, we just count their legs and divide by four." I was taking a grid. I put that in an aerial camera and it would record on the grid. I had it marked off in squares. I would take a pin and puncture each caribou and count the number of perforations and when we would go over it we could record how many in each grid and we would know how many we would get per grid and then we would multiply that by the number of grids. Then they could come up with a figure then. That's what we were doing.

King: But you didn't get to go on that one?

MG: No.

King: A good thing.

MG: They would have taken the other plane too. They made an opening that would hold the camera with the grid ((?))



King: That was a Twin Beach that he use to fly but he was in the Goose when he disappeared. It was a good thing you didn't get that trip. That's funny about the Civil Service test. You know, I never did take one. Nobody ever asked me to. You had been working for 15 years or more when you had to take yours? I remember when I got hired; there was no test. If somebody wanted to hire you, you filled out a little form and that was it. Then I changed jobs, but I still didn't have to take a test.

Another one of the guys that was around Anchorage at that time was Dick Myron. Do you remember him? He is still in Juneau. He worked for Holger on fish stuff for a while. A Fish and Wildlife Service reunion in Juneau wouldn't be very big anymore.

One of the things you did that I think all of us remember is that you put together some really nice annual reports for the Regional Office.

MG: Oh, I still have those, one of each. They had pictures in them and the cover was \_\_\_\_\_. They gave me the go ahead to do what I wanted to do on the cover so I put on a pretty cover, with pictures on the inside.

King: Those were great. I have some of them. I think I am in some of those pictures. How many of those did you do? You must have done at least 10 or 12 of them?

MG: No, about 4 or 5.

King: They made a lot of copies so there was enough for everybody to have one that wanted one. That was great.

MG: I think one of the covers was when we were at Chandalar Lake.

King: Yes, I think there is one there with a back light with just a silhouette of the airplane.

I don't think there are any of those sod houses any more at Anaktuvik Pass. They are all frame buildings.

MG: I flew over and it sure is a lot different than when we were there. I remember we had to go out in the lake to \_\_\_\_\_ -

King: We almost froze in there. I remember it was windy when we came in there. It was about 20 degrees and the lake looked all right. I didn't know how cold it was. It is not a very big lake and then the wind died down when you were taking pictures. Then it was just barely big enough. We had to take some gas out and leave it on the bank. At least, we didn't have to spend the winter there!

MG: That would have been something!

King: Do you hear from any of the other Fish and Wildlife guys?

MG: No.

King: Well, there is not a whole lot of people still around from the Fish and Wildlife in the 50's but when we get together, we always talk about what good years those were in the 50's. Sig Olsen is around; Ray Tremblay in Anchorage.

MG: I have Ray's book back there, *Tales of a Trapper*.

--shows a book in the Smithsonian(??) – *Aleutian Islands, Their People, and Natural History* – \_\_\_\_\_-vindication of the birds and plants by Henry Collins, Austin Clark, Egbert \_\_\_\_\_ with photos by Malcolm Greany.

MG: I still have a lot of those.

King: Was that during the war that you were out there taking pictures?

MG: Yes, I was the photographer for the Forest Service.

King: Published by the Smithsonian, February 5, 1945. So this is before the end of the war they came out with this. You spent some time out there?

MG: Yes.

King: You were a photographer for the Army then?

MG: No, I was with the Fish and Wildlife Service then.

King: That must have been when you caught the attention of Bob Henning(??) for his magazine pictures. We see Henning once in a while. He is getting a little frail. His magazine is in other hands.

MG: We still have this—

King: Yes, that's the Southeaster Magazine. That has some nice stuff in it sometimes.

MG: There is one picture I got of you putting fuel in the tank in a \_\_\_\_\_ plane. Forest Service had quite a few planes.

King: Fish and Wildlife planes. There is one pilot there still in Fairbanks. You probably knew – his name has slipped my mind. I guess I can't remember him. He flew Grummans for Coastal after he left Fish and Wildlife.

MG: Clarence flew for Coastal too.

King: Yes, he use to take annual leave and do that. I guess he couldn't get enough flying as a Regional Director.

Well, the old capitol building looks about the same. They polished it up a little. How long has it been since you were in Juneau? You were there for a visit a few years ago.

MG: In 1980. I was there in 1932 the first time. The Alaska Steamship(??) use to go right in front of the Mendenhall Glacier.

King: The buildings on the hillside are about the same as they were but the stores on South Franklin Street, where all the bars used to be are all T-shirt shops now. You can buy truckloads of T-shirts. They have a tramway up Mt. Roberts. That's kind of fun. We have gone up there a few times. They don't shoot as many bears as they did when Judge Folto(??) was around. Did you know him?

MG: Yes, he was a bear killer. He didn't like bears.

King: Well, I don't think people kill bears that way any more. They leave them alone unless they come into town and quite a lot of them do. They still have a lot of moose in Anchorage. Cars get a lot of them though.

Well, I don't know what other good stories you remember about Fish and Wildlife people. Hank Hansen still lives up here at Whidbey Island. I talk to him some. Ed Whitsell, I think he just turned 80. Hank just turned 80 also. Bob Scott, he lives up there somewhere in the San Juan Islands. There is quite a few of them up there. I don't keep track of every body either. Hard to keep in touch, times change.

Do you get out some – take a trip in the car?

MG: No.

King: Well, I suppose I best be going now. They are expecting me for supper.

--end of Side A of Tape #2—

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